

AN APOSTATE BAPTIST CHURCH AND A COMPROMISED BAPTIST DENOMINATION

April 12, 2003 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The pastor and associate pastor of the Glendale Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, defended homosexuality at a forum at Middle Tennessee State University on April 3.

The pastor of Glendale, Mark Caldwell, is a product of Southern Baptist education. He graduated from Baylor University and also has a B.D. and Ph.D. in church history from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Caldwell told the students at Middle Tennessee that the Bible contradicts itself often and instead of taking the Bible literally when it teaches about morality, we must “shine the example of Jesus’ life on those passages” (Baptist Press, April 10, 2003). This is nonsense, of course, because Jesus is the Author of the entire Bible and there is no contradiction between the earthly life of Jesus and the teaching of any other part of the Scripture. Jesus stated, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mat. 5:17).

As for the Bible’s teaching against homosexuality, Caldwell explains all of them away. He says that the story about Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 does not refer to the sin of homosexuality but rather to the sin of inhospitality. And the sodomites in the Old Testament refer only to temple prostitution. (This false view is supported by the improper translations found in the New International Version and many other contemporary editions.) And as Romans 1:21-27, Caldwell doesn’t try to explain that one away. Instead, he claims that Paul was simply wrong. Paul’s view of sexuality, we are told by this enlightened Baptist pastor, was “archaic at best” and he didn’t understand modern concepts of homosexual “orientation.”

Caldwell claims that Jesus didn’t teach on sexuality but “taught only a justice love ethic.” It appears that the man has been so busy organizing Easter Egg Hunts (one of the big items in the church’s calendar this month) and affiliating with “Tying Nashville Together” (an interfaith social agenda that he helped establish) that he hasn’t had time to read passages such as the following, to name a few:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mat. 5:28)

“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Mat. 5:32)

“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Mat. 15:18-19)

“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Mat. 19:9)

“When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: GO, AND SIN NO MORE” (John 8:10-11)

From those verses, it appears to me that Jesus was teaching a very strong moral ethic!

Caldwell's female associate, April Baker, is a lesbian. She has held her position at Glendale since July 1, 2002. She also is a product of Southern Baptist education, holding a Master of Divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and a B.A. from Furman University.

Baker testified to the students at Middle Tennessee State University that she doesn't take the Bible literally but looks for “deeper meanings.” She claims that when it comes to moral questions such as whether a couple should live together before marriage, there “aren't any right or wrong responses.” She claims that it was studying the Bible “with an open mind” (*very* open!) that helped her discover her homosexuality. In fact, she argues that she is truly a Bible believer and she gets angry when people accuse her “of not taking the Bible seriously”!

Interestingly, the Glendale Baptist Church Covenant, though it has 14 parts, does not mention preaching the gospel to the unsaved or living holy lives in this wicked world!

A SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH

Glendale Baptist is in the very heart of Southern Baptist country, in the city where the headquarters of the SBC is located, and it has, in fact, long been affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. In September the Nashville Baptist Association will finally vote on whether to expel the church. Assuming the vote wins, and that is not at all certain, we wonder why it has taken so long.

The level of apostasy represented by Glendale Baptist Church does not occur overnight. It is obvious that this church has been apostate for years, yet it has remained affiliated with the SBC. For example, Glendale was a founding member of “Tying Nashville Together” in 1993. This is an interfaith ecumenical social work endeavor that brings Baptists together with Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Unitarian-Universalists, United Methodists, United Presbyterians, United Church of Christ, Jews, etc. That one item of deep compromise and disobedience to Scripture is 10 years old.

We must also observe that even if this church is kicked out of the SBC at the local level, it will remain affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which, in turn, is affiliated with the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). And the Southern Baptist Convention forms a large part of the BWA.

Thus the SBC, while staunchly claiming today to be opposed to modernism (at least at the national level) remains in affiliation with modernistic churches such as Glendale at the local and state level and also by its ecumenical association in the Baptist World Alliance.

See the compromise and confusion created by those who replace the practice of biblical separation with that of denominational politics!

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